

Finance Committee Meeting March 31st 2011

Meeting was called to order at 7:10 PM. Present were Mr. Zukauskas, Mr. Yohalem, Mr Imberman and Mrs. Spaulding with guest Mr. Skorput. Minutes for March 24th were accepted as amended, Mr. Yohalem 1st, Mr. Zukauskas 2nd passed unanimously.

Mr. Farrell, Police Chief came before the Committee to discuss the police cruiser and the police salaries.

At prior meetings there was some discussion about purchasing a sedan for the police cruiser and maintaining the present cruiser for a back up vehicle. Mr. Farrell had done more research and stated that the sedan that would be available would be the Crown Victoria (this would be its last year!) then the new vehicle which would be the "interceptor" would not be available until 2012 and then it would be in its first year. The "Explorer" would have a base price of \$30,000 with a number of added expenses so he estimated putting the cost of \$40,000 (an extra cage needed and storage units besides electrical needs, with all wheel drive). Because the "old vehicle" is worth so little (has about 80,000 miles on it) he suggested that we keep it and if we get another police man the two vehicles can be used.

Turning to the proposal of enlarging the Police Department, Mr. Farrell stated that while maintaining the chief's position (with reduced hours) and the part time position, he suggests that another 32 hour man be hired so that the town would have 40 hour per week coverage. The police chief's position would remain active as well as supervisory. When questioned about the remark he made at the selectman's meeting about 521 911 calls generated out of New Marlborough he explained that these calls had been computer generated and included any calls and even return calls to the department. As Animal Inspector, Mrs. Spaulding stated that she could account for some of the calls because of "lost or strayed" animals. Mr. Farrell gave the committee an example of how beneficial a 32 hour officer would be. He stated that if a "break in" took place over the weekend and he responded he was unable to do the follow up during the week and this diminished the quality of the work. If he could pass the situation over to a "full time" police officer who could continue with the investigation the case would be more effectively handled. In the police salaries he placed a \$500 amount to handle the situations where an officer had to go to court or do other police activities on time for which that he was would not normally be paid. When Mr. Farrell was questioned about the income generated by patrolling he stated that the police department had obtained about \$3,600 through December 2010 and with another officer working 32 hours per week the income from speeding tickets should increase. The Committee thanked Mr. Farrell for his time and input and he left.

The Committee discussed the increase in police presence and its cost to the town. With the added salary and the benefits that a 32 hour police officer would receive (medical insurance etc.) the police salaries budget without benefits would rise from \$33,520 to \$54,060. and the total police budget with expenses would top about \$81,000. The members on the Committee had no way of judging how necessary the increased presence was, nor did they know how the community would feel about the increase and its cost. Once the police department has been increased it must remain so, so that the decision to increase it needs to be made by the town's voters. The Committee recommends that the total picture be presented at town meeting with it pros and cons and let the Town voters decide what they wish to do about this proposal.

Prudence Spaulding
April 1st 2011

Police Cruiser, no account number, requesting \$40,000, Mr. Zukauskas 1st, Mr. Yohalem 2nd passed unanimously.

Police Expenses 60210.99 (\$14,355) now requesting [\$17,715] increases mostly for increased cost of fuel, Mr. Imberman 1st, Mrs. Spaulding 2nd passed unanimously.

Police Salaries 60210.07 (\$33,552) now requesting [\$54,060] to be placed on the warrant with *"No Recommendation from the Finance Committee"*.

Group Insurance 90914.70 (\$89,232) now requesting [\$107,327]. This figure included funds for an extra highwayman and the possible addition of an additional policeman. Mrs. Spaulding 1st, Mr. Zukauskas 2nd passed unanimously.

Assessors Salaries 10141.00 (\$6,000) now requesting [\$6,300] Level Funded {\$6,000} Mr. Zukauskas 1st, Mr. Imberman 2nd passed unanimously.

Firefighters Stipend 60220.05 (\$42,800) now requesting [\$43,500] Level Funded { \$42,800} Mr. Zukauskas 1st, Mr. Imberman 2nd passed unanimously.

Reverse 911 60291.02 now requesting [\$1,000] Mrs. Spaulding 1st, Mr. Imberman 2nd passed unanimously.

Treasurers Software 10147.45 now requesting [\$4,500] Mr. Yohalem 1st, Mr. Imberman 2nd passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 8:20PM. The next meeting will be April 7th 2011.

Respectfully submitted,

Prudence Spaulding, Secretary.

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